

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for preserving configuration data during firmware modification, said method comprising:
 - a) extracting configuration data from an existing firmware structure in a firmware device;
 - b) storing said configuration data;
 - c) combining said configuration data with a new firmware structure thereby creating a configured firmware structure; and
 - d) downloading ~~a new~~ said configured firmware structure to said firmware device;
and
 - e) ~~restoring said configuration data to said new firmware structure in said firmware device.~~
2. (original) A method as described in claim 1 wherein said storing takes place on a web server.

3. (original) A method as described in claim 1 wherein said downloading is accomplished via a link between a download computing device and said firmware device.
4. (currently amended) A method for preserving configuration data during firmware modification, said method comprising:
- a) extracting configuration data from an existing firmware structure in a firmware device wherein said extracting is accomplished over a network connection;
 - b) storing said configuration data on a web server;
 - c) modifying said configuration data to be compatible with a new firmware structure;
 - d) combining said modified configuration data with said new firmware structure thereby creating a configured firmware structure; and
 - e) ~~downloading writing a new said configured~~ firmware structure from a download computing device to said firmware device, ~~wherein said downloading is accomplished via a direct connection; and~~
 - f) ~~restoring said configuration data to said new firmware structure in said device.~~
5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) A method as described in claim 4 wherein said ~~restoring~~
modifying also comprises installing additional configuration data not included in
said extracted configuration data.
7. (currently amended) A method for preserving configuration data during firmware
modification, said method comprising:
- a) uploading configuration data from an existing firmware structure in a firmware
device wherein said uploading is accomplished over a network connection;
 - b) storing said configuration data;
 - ~~c) downloading a new firmware structure from a download computing device to said~~
~~firmware device thereby replacing said existing firmware structure;~~
 - d) converting said configuration data to a format compatible with ~~said a~~ new
firmware structure; ~~and~~
 - e) combining said converted configuration data with said new firmware structure
thereby creating a configured firmware structure; and
 - f) installing said ~~converted configuration~~ configured firmware structure data to said
~~new-firmware structure in said device.~~
8. (original) A method as described in claim 7 wherein said storing is accomplished on a
web server.

9. (original) A method as described in claim 7 wherein said storing is accomplished on a download computing device.

10. (original) A method as described in claim 7 wherein said storing is accomplished on said firmware device.

11. (original) A method as described in claim 7 wherein said downloading is accomplished over a serial link.

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A system for preserving configuration data during firmware modification, said ~~method~~ system comprising:

- a) a firmware device comprising a memory for storing an upgradable firmware structure and configuration data;
- b) a web-based data management utility residing on a server;
- c) a download computing device;
- d) a network connection connecting said firmware device, said download computing device and said web-based management utility; and
- e) a direct connection between said firmware device and said download computing device, wherein said management utility may recover said configuration data from said firmware device, ~~and~~ store said configuration data on said server, combine said configuration data with a new firmware structure to create a configured firmware structure and write said configured firmware structure to said memory ~~while said firmware structure is upgraded to a new firmware structure and wherein said configuration data may be installed to said new firmware structure after upgrading thereby preserving said configuration data.~~

14. (currently amended) A system as described in claim 13 wherein said configuration data is converted to a new format before ~~installation on~~ combination with said new firmware structure.

15. (currently amended) A system as described in claim 13 wherein said configuration data is compiled with additional configuration ~~information~~ data not included in said extracted configuration data before ~~installation on~~ combination with said new firmware structure.

16. (currently amended) A system as described in claim ~~15~~ 46 wherein said additional configuration information is obtained by querying network devices.